

Preserve Hiking Trails



The preserve's nearly 41 miles of hiking and nature trails are open year-round. **Not all trails are listed below.** Catch and release fishing on Fox Creek Trail - no live bait except worms, lead free weights only. For resource protection and visitor safety, please stay on the designated trails (old ranch roads). Carry your own water. Watch for changing weather conditions or incoming storm activity. Cell phone coverage is limited, spotty or non-existent in many areas.

Shorter Nature Trails

Southwind Nature Trail - A 1.75-mile hiking trail through the tallgrass prairie, passing by the Lower Fox Creek School. Scenic overlook areas.

Bottomland Trail - A .5 or .75-mile loop through bottomland prairie along Fox Creek. Wayside exhibits and information kiosk tell the story of the prairie restoration and cultural history. This hard surface trail is wheelchair accessible and offers a comfort station.



Longer Hiking Trails

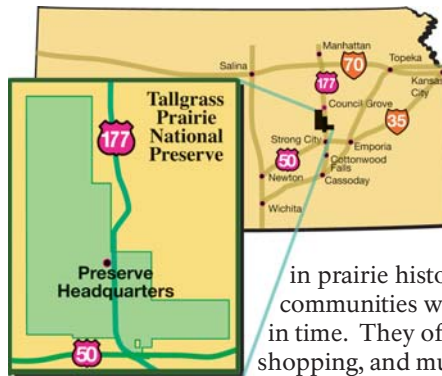
Fox Creek Trail - A 6.1 mile loop through bottomland prairie restoration areas along Fox Creek. Deep soils and abundant moisture offer 6 feet tall grasses in the fall.

Scenic Overlook Trail - A 6.4-mile round-trip hike along the bus tour route to the scenic overlook area. Experience the beauty of native rolling prairie, as you take in the wide-open vistas of 1,490 feet above sea level.

3 Pasture Loop Trail - A 3.8-mile hike through upland prairie. This trail winds along existing ranch roads and a mowed path. From May through July, cattle graze here as they have for the past century.

Red House Trail - A 6-mile hike through upland prairie and natural drainage areas. This trail passes through several historic ranching features, while giving an intimate view of wetland prairie flowers and vegetation through a scenic grove of cottonwood trees.

Big Pasture Trail - A 13-mile hike through breathtaking panoramas of native tallgrass prairie and shady oak-hickory respites along a clear prairie stream.



While in Chase County, make time to visit the towns of Strong City and Cottonwood Falls. Steeped in prairie history, these scenic communities will take you back in time. They offer dining, shopping, and much more.

Location: The preserve headquarters is located:

- 2 miles north of Strong City on Kansas State Highway 177 (Flint Hills National Scenic Byway)
- 18 miles west of Emporia
- 16 miles south of Council Grove
- 85 miles northeast of Wichita

Building Hours: The historic ranch buildings are open daily (except November 25, December 25, and January 1) from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Information Desk: Brochures and a 10-minute site orientation video are available in the barn (May - October) and on the back porch of the house (November - April).

A self-guiding tour of the historic ranch headquarters is available during daylight hours. A brochure, wayside exhibits, and historic ranch area cell phone tour tell the story of original owner Stephen F. Jones from 1878 to 1888.

The bookstore/gift shop in the ranch house is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Items include children and adult books, prints, postcards, educational and hand-crafted gift items, natural objects, and local cultural items. Bookstore is operated by the Kansas Park Trust, who is also the formal Friends Group.
Kansas Park Trust Telephone: 620-273-8139

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is a public/private partnership between the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy.



The Nature Conservancy website: www.nature.org/kansas

Visitor street address: Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
2480 KS Hwy 177, Strong City, KS 66869
Telephone: 620-273-8494 Fax: 620-273-8950
Email: tapr_interpretation@nps.gov
Website: www.nps.gov/tapr



National Park Service administrative mailing address:
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
P.O. Box 585, Cottonwood Falls, KS 66845

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
Strong City, Kansas



2010 Schedule of Programs and Visitor Activities

All programs, activities, and events are free.

Natural
History
Programs



Special
Events



Living History
Activities



Wildlife
Viewing



2010 Weekend Activities

Natural History Programs

- **Guided Bison Hike (2 hrs.)** - Begins at 9:00 a.m.

On the 2nd and 4th weekend (Sat and Sun) of each month from June through October, learn more about bison on the ranger-led hike into the Prairie Landscape area of the preserve. A minimum of two participants is required.



- **Natural History Program (20 min.)** - At 2:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th weekend (Sat and Sun) of each month from June through October, an interpretive program on prairie flora and fauna will be presented.

Cultural History Programs

- **Ranching Weekends** - From 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd weekends of each month (Sat, Sun, and holiday Mondays) from May 29 through October 17,



experience daily activities on a working ranch through interaction with living history interpreters and participation in activities, such as: historic cooking, music, quilting, carpentry, roping, fence mending, gardening, saddling, and blacksmithing. Programs given at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

- **Old-time Music & Wool Spinning**

On the 1st Saturdays only of each month from June through October, listen to live music, while watching wool spinning demonstrations.

- **Lower Fox Creek School** - Visit a one-room schoolhouse on weekends from noon to 4 p.m. in May, June, September and October. Visit with National Park Service volunteers about the role the school played in the early days of education on the prairie. McGuffey readers, slates, recitation bench, and other exhibits are on display.



Daily Activities

Prairie Bus Tours - This 90-minute prairie bus tour is available daily from the last Saturday in April through the last Sunday in October. Free of charge. A minimum of two passengers is required.

Bus tour times - 11 a.m. More available as staffing allows.

House Tours - Tours are conducted hourly from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. from May through October as staffing allows. Self-guiding house tours available when staffing is limited. House tour schedules vary November through April.

2010 Special Events at the Preserve

The preserve offers a variety of activities including guided tours of the 1881 ranch house, living history programs, a Jr. Ranger booklet, natural history programs, prairie bus tours, fishing, nature trails, and backcountry hiking trails.

- April 17 - Fire in the Flint Hills** - From 7 - 8 p.m. learn

how fire is used to preserve the prairie. From mid-March to mid-April, the Flint Hills come alive with prescribed fire on the preserve and neighboring lands.



Check our website for safety tips and links to community activities celebrating this annual event.

- April 24 - Junior Ranger Day** - Fun-filled day of Junior Ranger activities, including a Leave No Trace Scavenger Hunt. Earn a patch, badge, and certificate from real park rangers.

May 8 - Birds of Prey Program - At 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. in the historic barn, Vanessa Avara from the Milford Nature Center will introduce live birds of prey. An interpretive birding and children's workshop will be given at 1:30 p.m., using self-constructed paper airplanes. All workshop supplies provided.



- May 29, 30, 31 - Children's Weekend -**

Ranch Day - On Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. pet the farm animals, feed the chickens, and clean the stalls. Kids earn sticker tokens and a Spring Hill Ranch certificate after doing their chores.

School Day - On Sunday join the school marm and experience the one-room school with penmanship lessons, spelling, and reading from the McGuffey Readers. School day is from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Meet at the schoolhouse.

Flint Hills Fossils - On Monday, from 10 - 11 a.m. hike the Southwind Nature Trail and learn about fossils in the Flint Hills from Kansas Geological Survey geologists. Please call 620-273-8494 for reservations.

- June 5 - Horse-drawn Haying Demonstration** - From

10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. experience an authentic horse-drawn haying and raking demonstration in the field (weather permitting). Visit with living history interpreters as they prepare dinner for the harvesters.



June 19 & 20 - Historic Farming - Once a year the barn's top floor is opened to view the historic farm machinery from 1920 to the 1940s. Watch a corn sheller in action and hear the ring of the blacksmith's hammer on Saturday as he shares his knowledge and demonstrates the art of metallurgy.

June 26 - Flint Hills NABA Butterfly Count - From 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. a day of butterfly counts in the Flint Hills. Call 620-273-6034 to reserve your space for a day of fun on the prairie.



- July 3, 4, & 5 - Independence Day at the Ranch**

★ On Saturday, ride in a covered wagon, see historic cooking demonstrations, and watch the blacksmith hard at work.

Historic barn dance from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. with the Tallgrass Express String Band. Refreshments served.

★ On Sunday from 2 - 4 p.m., join in the historic games of an old-fashioned egg-toss, rope jumping, hoop and stick races, and a lively bucket brigade. Refreshments served.

★ On Monday enjoy a day of music and clogging in the historic barn. Clogging activities at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.



July 10 - Night Sky Program - From 8 - 11 p.m. view the night sky at the preserve. Schedule is weather dependent; reservations are required. Call 620-273-8494.



- September 4, 5, & 6 - Labor Day Weekend**

Quilt Show - View local quilts displayed and watch quilting demonstrations all three days in the historic barn while voting for your favorites. Winners will be announced on Monday at 1 p.m.



September 11 & 12 - Prairie Wildflowers - Enjoy wildflower and medicinal plant hikes, Kansas Native Plant Society education programs, prairie bus tours, special speakers, nature trails, and jelly making.



September 25 - The American Indian & Bison - A special American Indian program focusing on the history of local tribes, clothing, and cultural stories will be presented at 10:30 a.m. Witness flint knapping demonstrations throughout the day. At 12:30 p.m. learn about the bison.



- October 16 - Prairie Harvest Festival**

& Barn Dance - Enjoy an old-fashioned harvest festival as living history characters get ready for winter. Cider making, hay rack rides, live music, blacksmithing, and pumpkin carving from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Barn dance from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. with the Tallgrass Express String Band. Refreshments served.



- November 27 - December 31 - Holiday Ranch House**

The historic ranch house and headquarters area are decorated with natural objects and greenery representing an 1880s historic holiday setting. Special open house event on November 27th. Refreshments served.

